



West Island Amateur Radio Club Bulletin

October 2014 Edition

Upcoming Meeting – October 20th 2014

This month's topic

“ Amateur Radio curriculum changes at Industry Canada and new on-line licensing courses at RAQI ”

Presented by François Daigneault, VE2AAY / VA2AAY

President's Message and Report

by Malcolm Harper, VE2DDZ (ve2ddz@ve2ddz.ca)

Hi all,

Thanks to Eamon VE2EGN, Dan VA2KEY, and George VE2NGH for summer activity reports at the September meeting. I know Peter VA2XMX wanted to give a report as well, but wasn't able to attend the meeting. Anyone is welcome to give a flash talk (five - ten minutes) at a future meeting. Just let me know and we'll schedule it in.

Gilles VE2TZZ has suggested that we take a more active approach to making visitors feel welcomed at WIARC meetings. He has some ideas as to how we might go about this that we can discuss during October's meeting.

I worked Jean-François VA2SS of Sherbrooke during a SOTA activation September 13. That was the first time we had worked and I recognized his call sign when I was browsing on eHam.net later that week. His eHam article gives a pretty much turnkey way of adding a macro keypad to any modern transceiver. My rig has two buttons that I can program for any two features that I commonly use - programmable macro buttons. Instead of dialling through menus for those features, I just press the correct button. His technique adds an external keypad full of programmable macro buttons. We have reproduced his article in this newsletter.

We don't see much of François VE2AAY at WIARC meetings since he moved to Granby, but he is still very active contributing to Amateur Radio in Canada. He has continued to organize and teach an online, interactive course on behalf of WIARC each year. His course, presented over Skype, entails the students meeting with him online two evenings a week. While students follow along through materials he has distributed, he explains the evening's lesson and answers questions. This course has been very effective, not only at preparing students for their Industry Canada exams, but also recruiting active WIARC members. Quite a few WIARC members joined the club through François' course, including three members of the current executive. François is an excellent teacher and puts much of himself into the course.

Two of François' recent projects are:

- an extensive revision of the Industry Canada Amateur Radio qualification question banks.
- creation of online courses leading to Amateur Radio qualification hosted on the RAQI website.

The difference between the new online courses hosted at RAQI and the courses François has led on behalf of WIARC are that the new RAQI courses while interactive and online are not live with an instructor. I am looking forward to hearing from François about the changes to the question banks and about the pros (and cons?) of the new courses at RAQI.

October 20, 2014 Meeting Agenda

- Quebec Radio Museum update
- Visitors at WIARC meetings
- SIGs
- Other Business
- Break (coffee, ragchew, cookies)
- Amateur Radio curriculum changes at Industry Canada and new on-line licensing courses at RAQI - François VE2AAY

I will leave you with this old video on how NOT to approach your Morse exam (found via w2lj.blogspot.com):

<http://youtu.be/NJGrIUXCZzc>

See you on the 20th.

73,

Malcolm VE2DDZ

What happened Minutes of the September 2014 WIARC meeting

by Keith Glashan, VE2MTL (kglashan@yahoo.ca)

Minutes of the WIARC Meeting September 15, 2014 By Keith Glashan VE2MTL

The meeting began at 19:43. Malcolm VE2DDZ presided and welcomed 21 attendees. There was the usual roll call with call signs. This evening, we had a first time visitor Bob VE2PDT. I think he enjoyed the meeting and we certainly hope to see him again in the future. The details of the meeting follow.

1. Vern VE2MBS/VE2QQ/SK: We held a silent key ceremony for Vern VE2MBS who passed away in July. George VE2NGH spoke about Vern and his long involvement with the amateur radio community in Montreal. Malcolm VE2DDZ and Pierre VE2PPF also had kind words to say and mentioned his time as one of the instructors of the amateur radio course given by MARC.



Vern VE2MBS VE2QQ

2. Radio Talk 2014: By mid-July, it was noticed that our radio talk event was in trouble. Terry VE2WTQ and Malcolm VE2DDZ realized that we

did not have a sufficient number of confirmed speakers for the September event. It was suggested that it be postponed until November of this year or the spring of 2015. There was quite some discussion from the floor concerning dates, the format of the event, and the subjects for the talks. Nobody suggested that the radio talk event should be disbanded. On the contrary, the idea is great, but we all agree that it needs more promotion, thought, and effort.

3. Quebec Radio Museum: Malcolm VE2DDZ reported on the status of the Quebec radio museum. He received an email from Jacques, who contacted 3 towns in Quebec concerning the possibility of a venue for the museum. So far he has received two negative responses and is waiting for a response from the third.

4. 146.910 Repeater: Charles VE2RFI reported that the 146.910 repeater has some intermod problems. It was suggested that we install a PL tone on it. Charles will look into this possibility.

5. Winter Field Day: Edward VE3VMF asked if anyone had plans or a date for winter field day this year. Harrison VE2HKW will try to have an answer for him next month.

6. Break Time Cookies: There was no one scheduled to bring treats for the break this evening. However, Dave VA2DGC and Keith VE2XL both surprised us as each brought cookies for the event. It's either feast or famine. Tonight, it was feast. Thanks Dave and Keith for your thoughtfulness and

efforts. Keith VE2XL advised me that June VE2XS had really done all the work and that he was merely in charge of transportation. In that case I would like to extend a special thanks to June VE2XS. According to the volunteer sheet, Bob VE2AXO will be providing treats for the October meeting.

7. After the Break: After the break we had several members report on their summer activities. First, Eamon VE2EGN reported on our successes at field day 2014. He presented his points summaries on screen. Then George VE2NGH reported on his experience on field day and also about a trip with Dan VA2KEY and Eamon VE2EGN to Mount Hereford near the Vermont border. On that occasion they used 6 m and 2 m beams.

He reported that, unfortunately, the conditions were poor. However he still enjoyed the mountain topping experience. Harrison VE2HKW reported on his W1AW event in Vermont with Marc-Andre VE2EVN. He also talked about a SOTA event to Mount St. Bruno with Marc-Andre and Malcolm. Finally, Malcolm VE2DDZ reported on his 12 SOTA activations this summer. Four of which were new SOTA activations, Mount Saddle on the Quebec/USA border, and 3 in Gaspé. He had prepared a large number of slides showing the various mountains that he had conquered. He also reported on a radio balloon event which took place on Saturday, August 30 during the mega SOTA event. The balloon was launched around 10 AM. He was able to work the balloon from Mont St. Hilaire.

50/50 Draw: Bram VE2XCS was unable to attend this evening and therefore there was no 50/50 draw.

9. Door Prizes: This month, there were no door prizes available. Sorry, maybe next month.

10. A Pun my Word: He had a photographic memory that was never developed.

The meeting adjourned at 22:22. See you October 20th, 2014.

73,

&

Good DX de Keith VE2MTL

Smart Expander Keypad... for Your Radio

by Jean-François Ménard, VA2SS - Sherbrooke, QC

I believe that many amateurs would enjoy more flexibility when using their favorite radio.

I am thinking of the frustration of always searching inside the radio menu, or trying to set a bunch of actions at the same time, like set split, set TX bandwidth to DX, set EQ settings to DX, set receiving filter with narrow bandwidth, etc., all this when trying to work a rare DX!

With the Smart Expander project, you need **ONLY push ONE button!**



The main goals of this project:

- To use your favorite radio with more efficiency.
- To let the user customize the station on their own preferences: DX, rag chew, etc.
- To give the user the benefit of using complex macros to fit their needs.

A few advantages:

- Low cost integration
- Easy to program by the user, from a simple command to more complex macros... many n CAT commands at the same time!
- Standalone solution, NO need of a PC to use it; only once for initial programming.
- Serial polling. Only TX over the serial line when a key is pressed on the keypad.
- Very responsive and gives the ability to add pause in macro execution, to let the radio digest the data stream.



I also did a template for my own needs. I divided the keypad into different color regions; this gives the user a faster way to locate a button.



- **GREEN** = all things related to “receiving functions” or so.
- **BLUE** = all things related to “memory” usage.
- **RED** = related to transmit settings, like SPLIT function, TX bandwidth and EQ settings.

- **BLACK** = alternate functions, execute command display in black on the keys with the ALT FNC button. A total of 70 macros could be programmed!
- **PINK** = other user functions.

Examples of ONE button push macros:

- **SSB Normal 2.4kHz with COMP ON** : It sends CAT commands to set your TX bandwidth to 2.4kHz, set your compressor setting and also set your transmit EQ settings if you have one and adjust the MIC gain if needed.
- **SPLIT SSB UP+10** : It sends CAT commands to COPY VFO A to B, send SPLIT command, narrow the RX bandwidth to 2.2kHz, set XIT and RIT to 0 to be safe, enable the DUAL RX on some radios, etc.
- **RESET TX** : It sends CAT command to reset every TX related settings, XIT, RIT, SPLIT, disable DUAL RX, etc.

Your imagination is the only limit!

The recipe is simple, the project only needs and uses a serial RS-232 programmable keypad, like the one found at Genovation, see: www.genovation.com for more information. If you need to connect the keypad and the PC to the radio at the same time, say for logging, you will also need a serial splitter that can be found at B&B Electronics see: www.bb-elec.com for more information. The keypad will use any CAT RS-232 port of your radio. It will simulate any control CAT command sent by software like HRD, etc. But you have no need of a PC when operating the keypad. This is a standalone solution once it is well programmed. So it can also be used in the field too!

It will also enhance your station ergonomic position and add more flexibility. I found this idea when trying to use my Elecraft KX3 as my main station. Now I have all needed buttons to help me improve my skill when using my radio setup. That's it!

I really hope some of you will like this idea. Please feel free to contact me if you have question.

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+ Free Flea Market Tables +++

Flea-market tables available free to members. Members are reminded that there are always tables available at the regular monthly meetings.

So, if you wish to sell something, or clean out your basement, or do your spring cleaning early, you don't have to wait for the next Hamfest. Just bring those junk boxes, antenna parts, and old rigs to the next WIARC

meeting and set up your table at the back of the hall. It's free. It's fun. It's win-win.

\$\$\$ Swap Shop \$\$\$

To advertise items for sale, send details to Bram VE2XCS, the newsletter editor at ve2xcs@bell.net.

He will gladly include them in the next bulletin. Please remember to include all pertinent information relating to the item you wish to sell.

Footnotes About Us

The West Island Amateur Radio Club was founded in 1972

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Articles and comments are always welcomed; please submit them before the first Monday of the month for publication in that month's edition to the editor's attention, VE2CWI@RAC.CA

Website: <http://www.wiarc.ca>

Repeaters: VE2RWI VHF - 146.910 MHz (-)

VE2RWI UHF - 443.050 MHz (+) (141.3 Hz CTCSS tone transmitted by both repeaters).

Monthly Meetings

Held the 3rd Monday of every month, except July & August at: Lakeside Heights Baptist Church, 275 Braebrook, Pointe-Claire (West Island part of Montreal). Visitors are always welcomed.

WIARC NETS on the 146.91 VE2RWI Repeater

Information Net each Sunday evening at 8PM running for approximately an hour.

All are welcome to participate.